

Serial No.: 10/055,787
Docket No.: VAS-5639
Amendment dated March 2, 2004
Responsive to Office Action of September 24, 2003

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-20 were pending. Claims 15 and 19-20 have been cancelled, and claims 21-32 added. Therefore, claims 1-14, 16-18, and 21-32 are presently pending.

A certified copy of the Australian priority document is attached.

A Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is attached.

The specification has been amended to update the priority claim to reflect issuance of the parent application.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Accordingly, the antecedent problems have been fixed as indicated above.

Claims 1-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0123790 to White, et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection on the basis that claims 1-14 are fully supported by the parent application that has a filing date (December 3, 1998) earlier than the effective filing date (September 27, 2001) of White, et al. The parent application (Serial No. 09/204,699) has issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,368,345. Please see Fig. 2 and col. 21, line 60 through col. 24, line 41 (especially col. 24, lines 26-41) of the '345 patent which discloses the subject matter of claims 1-14. The same subject matter was carried over to the present application, though not in precisely the same presentation. Regardless, the '345 patent was incorporated by reference in the "related applications" section of the instant case, and if the Examiner believes that more of the parent specification is required to support the claims it can be added by amendment. As a result, claims 1-14 are believed in condition for allowance.

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,782,904 to White. However, claims 16-18 are indicated to be allowable. Therefore, without conceding the merits of the rejection of claim 15, Applicant has made claim 16 independent, and canceled claim 15 to facilitate prompt allowance of the allowable claims. Claims 16-18 are therefore in condition for allowance.

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Although Applicants does not concede the merits of the rejection of claims 19-20, these two claims have been canceled to facilitate prompt allowance of the allowable claims.

New claims 21-32 are added to cover further aspects of the invention fully disclosed in the specification. These claims all depend from allowable base claim 1.

Applicant asserts that claims 1-14, 16-18, and 21-32 are in condition for allowance based on the foregoing amendments and remarks. If there is any further hindrance to allowance of the claims, the Examiner is encouraged contact the undersigned by telephone.

Date: March 2, 2004

Respectfully submitted,



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